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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 52/169 A of 16 December 1997, the present report describes the financial and material assistance provided by the United Nations system to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its economic recovery and reconstruction process in 1997.

A. Context

2. Since the adoption of resolution 52/169 A, the political/military/security situation in the country has evolved drastically. As a result of the armed conflicts, involving several countries in the region, many programmes and activities have been suspended. In areas where security can be assured, some humanitarian relief operations have been carried out.

3. The Government formulated a three-year "*Programme Triennial Minimum*", aimed at defining the Government's most urgent priorities. This has enabled United Nations entities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to begin slowly shifting the focus of their activities from emergency to rehabilitation and development. The triennial programme was later sharpened and presented to the "Friends of the Congo" meeting, chaired by the World Bank and held at Brussels in December 1997, as the Emergency Stabilization and Reconstruction Programme. Although donor response still suffers from a "wait-and-see" approach, the programme reflects the Government's determination to boost the development of the country and to promote indigenous capability.

4. United Nations entities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have, therefore, adapted their programmes in order to address the Government's priorities as defined by the new authorities, and have broadened the scope of their activities in the eastern part of the country, where most of their interventions are still concentrated, to embrace the entire Congolese territory.

B. United Nations role in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

5. In 1997, financing from the United Nations system was evaluated at US$ 731.9 million, most of it coming from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (25 per cent) and the World Food Programme (WFP) (43 per cent), and covering a wide range

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of sectors. This amount represented 74 per cent of external assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997.

6. Considering the political turmoil that affected the country during the first semester of 1997, funds and human resources have been mainly allocated to emergency operations. The United Nations system's strategy in this area was to avoid any actions likely to create conditions for dependency on emergency relief assistance. Thus, for example, UNHCR began a quick repatriation operation for Congolese refugees from Brazzaville and continuous operation for Rwandan refugees. Emergency activities were and still are considered as stopgap measures, rather than goals in themselves.

7. With the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) takeover in May 1997, basic programmes have been implemented throughout the country. United Nations agencies are committed to formulating new projects and to reshaping their ongoing activities as the Government defines new priorities. United Nations agencies developed several programmes aimed at reinforcing the capacity of the new authorities in various sectors, such as epidemiological survey, coordination of external assistance, public services reform, governance and judicial reform.

8. Prior to the outbreak of the current conflict in August 1998, the following actions constituted the United Nations agencies' main achievements in the various sectors:

(a) *Emergency*: The setting up of a United Nations Disaster Management Team in Kinshasa enabled the coordination of emergency relief, while maintaining a continuous flow of information to the agencies or United Nations Headquarters on all aspects of the crisis. In the field, UNHCR, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WFP provided assistance to 400,000 refugees fleeing the conflict as well as internally displaced persons throughout the country. The United Nations disaster management capacity was confirmed by two major events that occurred during the year: the drought threat in South Kivu and the outbreak of floods and cholera epidemics in Province Oriental. The United Nations mobilized a coordinated and timely response to the needs of the affected population.

(b) *Rehabilitation*: UNHCR launched the "Expanded Rehabilitation Programme" in affected refugees areas of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This $20 million programme covered all aspects of rehabilitation: schools, health centres, water and sanitation, environment and agriculture. The programme was followed by a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) community-based rehabilitation programme, aimed at reinforcing local capacities in crisis-affected areas through small-scale projects, representing a global amount of $4 million.

(c) *Agriculture*: In this essential sector, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNDP have developed programmes relating to food security and capacity-building of public services amounting to $30 million. For the first time in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a comprehensive agricultural programme was formulated through a joint process with the Government, and will result in alleviating the suffering of the Congolese people.

(d) *Governance*: In line with the "Friends of Congo" process, UNDP has developed projects aiming at reinforcing the capacity of the Government to conceive programmes and reforms. Structural reforms, external assistance coordination and capacity-building are the main focus of UNDP assistance.

(e) *Health*: UNICEF has successfully organized local immunization days in 46 towns in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Kinshasa, thus reaching more than two million children under the age of five. However, this achievement cannot conceal the level of deterioration of the country's health structures, and, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP are thus involved in programmes aimed at enhancing the Government's capacity to formulate a national health policy and at addressing the needs of the population affected by various epidemic diseases. In addition, the United Nations Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is coordinating the efforts of various agencies to help the people of Congo to adopt safe behaviours and get better protection and treatment against the disease.

(f) *Human rights*: The Human Rights Field Office in Kinshasa has managed to implement its activities despite a very suspicious environment. However, through the organization of seminars for local non-governmental organizations and government officials, the process of strengthening human rights organizations and civil society segments is well under way. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has clearly established the need for reinforcing human rights structures and reform of the judicial system. This task has become the main objective for 1998 of the Human Rights Field Office.

(g) *Social affairs*: The rights and the status of women and children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have drawn the attention of United Nations agencies, particularly the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNDP.

C. Constraints

9. A major constraint encountered by the United Nations is the difficult environment that persists in the country. Prior to the outbreak of the hostilities, the Government had undertaken a major transformation in its policies in the political and economic fields. However, the continuing conflict has affected the Government's efforts to introduce those changes.

10. Relations with donors and investors also remain difficult, especially as some donors are conditioning the resumption of aid on the political and human rights situation.

11. Another major constraint is the heavy debt burden.

D. Prospects

12. The United Nations agencies will pursue their efforts to assist the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the future, steps will be taken to provide more coordinated and coherent assistance in the humanitarian and development areas. This will enable a substantial enlargement of United Nations interventions.

13. Besides, the United Nations system will promote government coordination in order to encourage investment by donors and private entrepreneurs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

II. United Nations programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

A. Economic Commission for Africa

14. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) participated in the meeting of the "Friends of the Congo" held in Brussels, on 3 and 4 December 1997. At the meeting, ECA indicated that its assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo would be mainly in the form of technical assistance, in terms of advisory services, analytical studies and human and institutional capacity-building. ECA pledged to render technical assistance in five areas among the Democratic Republic of the Congo's development priorities which fall within the Commission's work programme: (a) national statistics and information systems development; (b) public sector reform; (c) community participation; empowerment and good governance; (d) poverty assessment and policy formulation; and (e) regional infrastructural linkages.

15. Subsequently, ECA sent a senior regional adviser and an expert on national accounts, on a two-week technical mission to Kinshasa to meet pertinent officials of the Government and to hold consultations with UNDP to assess the needs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for human and institutional capacity-building in the area of statistics and development. The main objectives of the mission were:

(a) To conduct a statistical needs assessment at the country level, with emphasis on national accounts, government finance and balance-of-payments statistics;

(b) To formulate, on the basis of the assessment, specific recommendations for the rehabilitation of the various national bodies entrusted with the responsibility of producing statistical data, namely the National Statistical Office, the Central Bank of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the National Institute for Economic and Social Research.

16. As a follow-up to the mission, in June 1998, an ECA national accounts team conducted a five-day training workshop, the aim of which was to familiarize Democratic Republic of the Congo national experts from various departments with the main features and structure of the 1993 System of National Accounts.

17. Looking ahead, in the next few months, at the request of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ECA plans to conduct another training workshop on methods of compiling government accounts within the framework of the 1993 System of National Accounts. It should also be noted that other partners such as the Observatoire Economique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank plan to cooperate with the Commission in promoting the improvement of price statistics and the development and maintenance of a national register of enterprises and establishments in Democratic Republic of the Congo.

18. In the area of demographics, a Senior Regional Adviser in the area of population and development presented a paper entitled, "L'évolution du cadre de référence en matière des politiques de population en Afrique" at a sensitization seminar for high-level policy makers and programme managers on population policies in Africa, which was organized in Kinshasa, from 8 to 10 June 1998, by the Union for African Population Studies. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was one for the participating countries at this meeting, together with other countries from the region. ECA, in partnership with UNFPA and the Technical Support Services, anticipates being called upon to provide technical

assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its country population assessment exercise.

19. ECA is also collaborating with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), UNESCO and UNICEF, and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa in restructuring and strengthening the African Bureau for Educational Sciences, a specialized institution of OAU based in Kinshasa.

20. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is covered by the ECA Subregional Development Centre for Eastern Africa based in Kigali (temporarily housed at ECA in Addis Ababa). However, in view of the country's great geographic spread and its strategic location in Africa, it is also covered to varying degrees by the Subregional Development Centre for Central Africa based in Yaoundé and by integration institutions. The work of the subregional development centres geared to the development priorities identified collectively by the member States in each of the subregions. In the Eastern, Southern, and Central African subregions, where the Democratic Republic of the Congo is situated, the development priorities include peace-building, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and re-launching development; infrastructure development and inter-State connection; trade and development. Progress on tackling these problems requires a sustained approach through deepening regional cooperation and integration. ECA subregional development centres are geared to serving the member States by providing technical assistance to cooperating with subregional economic communities, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of the Central African States, the Central African Customs and Economic Union and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries.

21. In October 1997, the Subregional Development Centre for Eastern Africa organized a high-level seminar on women's advancement and economic and social empowerment in the Eastern and Southern African subregion. The seminar focused on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as it emerged from a period of conflict and crisis and prepared to relaunch its development.

22. In the year ahead, ECA expects to provide further technical assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at the request of the Government, in the five priority areas that it identified at the Brussels meeting of the "Friends of the Congo". ECA, through its Eastern, Southern, and Central African subregional development centres, will also continue to work towards strengthening and deepening the Democratic Republic of the Congo's integration with the neighbouring countries, as part of the solution of these formidable problems of rehabilitation, reconstruction, and re-launching of its development.

B. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

1. Emergency programme

23. Since 1997, FAO has been carrying out a $ 1,406,041 emergency programme, consisting of a set of four projects, covering the eastern part of the country. Three of the projects have been implemented in the eastern provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu. Details are as follows:

(a) The first project is a $300,000 Technical Cooperation Programme project aimed at coordinating emergency operations in the agricultural sector and providing farm inputs;

(b) The second project ($251,045), financed with funds provided to FAO by the Government of Sweden in response to the United Nations initiative for the Great Lakes region, is aimed at supplying farm inputs;

(c) Another project ($533,000) for the provision of farm inputs was financed with funds provided to FAO by the Government of Belgium in response to the United Nations initiative for the Great Lakes region.

24. As a result, 160 tons of bean seeds, 78 tons of peanut seeds, 1.7 tons of vegetable seeds and 82,000 hoes were provided to the poorest agricultural households by the end of the year in the two provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu. The fourth project, whose coverage extends to the Province Orientale, has a budget of $322,000 and is still in the planning stage. The amount will cover the cost of an inoculation programme for livestock in the eastern provinces.

2. Rehabilitation, recovery and development

Technical Cooperation Programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

25. Since 1997, the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme for rehabilitation, recovery and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has amounted to $909,505 and covered five projects. A $145,000 project has enabled the Democratic Republic of the Congo to formulate a policy for farm mechanization. Another ongoing project ($270,000) is aimed at setting up an information system for food security and nutrition in three provinces. Three other

projects with a total budget of $494,500, will start soon and will deal with the evaluation of food supply in the Kivu region, support to the forum on agricultural policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the formulation of a Master plan and an investment programme for the agricultural sector, respectively.

Special Programme for Food Security

26. FAO's Special Programme for Food Security will also include the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During the first three years, FAO is expected to raise $0.3 million from its Technical Cooperation Programme; $0.25 million from the FAO/Special Programme for Food Security; $0.3 million from the technical cooperation among developing countries agreement; and $2.45 million from bilateral and multilateral funds. Moreover, an additional $3 million is expected to be provided to the Democratic Republic of the Congo from arrangements made between FAO, the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

TeleFood projects

27. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is to benefit from $19,269 from funds collected by TeleFood 1997. This is to be used to provide direct assistance to a piscicultural association in the Lower Congo province and for the conservation of fish products along the coast and at the Estuary of the Congo River.

United Nations Development Programme/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations programme

28. In 1997, four UNDP/FAO projects for a total of $3,936,644 were implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: a seed project; an agricultural extension services project; a rice project; and a project on agricultural data collection. Amidst a difficult environment, the four projects have yielded beneficial results on farm production. The seeds project has resulted in the integration of two activities related to cassava, the main food crop in the country: the multiplication of cassava cuttings and the establishment of nurseries for high-yield cuttings in each province. The project has also produced several publications: a "National Catalogue of Species and Varieties of food crops" and two volumes of "Seed production techniques in Congo". In December 1997, the extensions service was made of 183 support structures and 2,556 extension workers and directly covered 450,000 farmers (43 per cent of them female). The total number of farmers affected by the service, including those indirectly involved in the programme, reached 0.8 million. The rice project has so far resulted in the formulation of a strategy document on the development of rice-cropping in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the development of various varieties of wet rice crops; and the design of an irrigation system in the Pool Malebo (Kinshasa). The four projects were ended by UNDP in December 1997.

Trust fund programme

29. With funding provided by the Government of Belgium, FAO plans to provide technical assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the following activities:

(a) Seed and farm inputs production ($1 million) for nine provinces, excluding North Kivu and South Kivu;

(b) Development of urban and suburban horticulture (about $1.3 million).

Regional programme

30. FAO has been conducting eight regional programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, covering the following:

(a) Integrated development of small-scale fishing in Western Africa;

(b) Research for fishing management in Lake Tanganyika;

(c) Improvement of legal framework for cooperation, management and development of fishing in the Western African coastal States;

(d) Information and cooperation system on fish products trade in Africa;

(e) Food supply and distribution in French-speaking African cities;

(f) Operational information and management system of hydrous resources in the Nile Basin countries;

(g) Mapping of land use in Eastern Africa established from satellite data.

C. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

31. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights established the Human Rights Field Office in Kinshasa in December 1996. In accordance with resolution 1995/69 of the Commission on Human Rights, the

High Commissioner was invited to consider, within existing resources, the recommendation by the Special Rapporteur to send human rights experts, in consultation with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Pursuant to the above-mentioned resolution, the main task of the Office consists in monitoring the situation of human rights and in giving advice to the governmental authorities and to non-governmental organizations on international human rights standards, and thereafter to contribute to the implementation of technical cooperation projects in the field of human rights.

1. Programmes and activities

32. The activities of the Field Office include:

(a) Following closely the general human rights situation throughout the country, and reporting abuses that may occur; this involves the provision of information and analysis to the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, as well as to the High Commissioner for Human Rights;

(b) Assisting the Government to reform and strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law (institution building);

(c) Advising and assisting human rights non-governmental organizations and certain segments of the civil society on international human rights standards;

(d) Organizing seminars with governmental institutions or local human rights organizations.

2. Priorities of the Human Rights Field Office

Assistance and training of human rights non-governmental organizations, and strengthening of civil society

33. This aspect of the Field Office's activities focuses on strengthening human rights organizations and certain segments of civil society aimed at the consolidation of their role in the process of the transition to democracy and respect for human rights. Indeed, a number of Congolese human rights activists have been obliged to seek asylum or to live clandestinely, especially since the arrival of the new political authorities, and to a certain extent, the lack of experience and material resources of human rights non-governmental organizations, which hinders the carrying out of their tasks. In this context, a training programme designed for human rights non-governmental organizations and other important actors of civil society could reinforce their capacity of collecting and analysing information and providing reports on human rights developments to the special rapporteur and other bodies. Such a programme would also enable them to master instruments and mechanisms at the national, regional (African Commission for Human and People's Rights) and international levels.

Collection of information regarding the general human rights situation

34. In addition to projects aimed at the reinforcement of human rights non-governmental organizations and certain segments of civil society, the Field Office continues to follow developments in the field of human rights and political transition. A small office such as the one established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo cannot effectively carry out comprehensive monitoring of the human rights situation throughout such a vast country, which suffers from a lack of adequate infrastructure, even if suboffices were to be established in various regions of the country. The monitoring of the general human rights situation should thus be carried out through collection and analysis of information gathered by the network of local human rights organizations, as well as with other relevant bodies which have developed during the last years, and which should be strengthened.

Identification and assessment of needs relating to institution building

35. Related aspects include the following:

(a) Comprehensive assessment, rehabilitation and reconstruction of public institutions, most notably the justice system, capacity-building and reinforcement of human rights non-governmental organizations, as well as certain segments of the civil society, is essential. In this respect, the Field Office began to carry out such assessment in consultation with other international organizations, the diplomatic community, human rights non-governmental organizations and the Government.

(b) From 13 to 15 December 1997, the Field Office organized a seminar aimed at bringing together Congolese human rights non-governmental organizations, certain segments of the civil society, including gathering 70 national human rights activists and international human rights and humanitarian organizations. The participants in the seminar reflected on their common priorities for the coming months and the year 1998, including joint projects between national human rights organizations and the Office. The Office will finance some 20 projects, from various human rights non-governmental organizations, which are currently under selection.

(c) A second seminar, held from 11 to 13 March 1998 with mainly government officials from various ministries, was designed to identify and evaluate the human rights priorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 1998. Various recommendations were adopted, including strengthening the human rights infrastructure in the country and the implementation of governmental coordination for human rights. These activities, which will culminate with the next seminar planned for early September 1998, are aimed at the finalization of a national plan for the protection and promotion of human rights as an important aspect of the international community's support for the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts of the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Furthermore, initiatives were undertaken towards enhancing awareness of the non-governmental organization partners through the establishment of two main components, namely, the Centre de documentation and Centre d'assistance judiciaire et d'éducation juridique. The Human Rights Field Office has received support from UNDP and other United Nations agencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

D. International Labour Organization

36. Since the second half of 1997, the ILO Field Office in Kinshasa has developed a series of activities revolving around the three following priorities:

(a) Employment promotion and poverty alleviation;

(b) Protection of workers;

(c) Promotion of democracy and workers' fundamental rights.

37. In addition to ongoing projects funded by UNDP, contacts have been entered into with other donors for the launching, in a foreseeable future, of the following activities funded, *inter alia*, by the World Bank, the European Union, the Belgian cooperation agency and UNICEF.

1. Employment promotion and poverty alleviation

Operational projects

38. Operational projects including the following:

(a) Project ZAI/90/002, entitled "Feeder Roads" was implemented from April 1990 to December 1997, based on the labour-intensive method and with UNDP funding ($3,927,776);

(b) In association with UNOPS, implementation of a five-year $28 million project, entitled "National Programme for Agricultural and Rural Sector Recovery", (UNDP/UNOPS/ZAI/96/008) is under consideration.

Future projects

39. The following projects are planned:

(a) Assistance to the National Institute for Job Training ($1.4 million) is expected from UNDP. A request from the Government was received in September 1997, followed by a field mission for the formulation of a project document funded by ILO.

(b) Preparatory work for the formulation of a support programme for the Ministries of Recovery, Construction, Agriculture, and Environment based on the labour-intensive method for job development was undertaken by an ILO mission. On the basis of the contacts that were made, funding is expected, *inter alia*, from UNDP, the World Bank, the European Union and the Belgian and Italian cooperation agencies.

(c) ILO wishes to respond to the United Nations initiative for the Great Lakes region. In this regard, participation of ILO in rehabilitation and reforestation activities, during which labour-intensive methods could be used in collaboration with UNHCR, WFP and FAO, can be expected. Other activities related to the assistance to be extended to vulnerable groups are considered in collaboration with UNICEF.

(d) In response to a request from the Ministry of Agriculture, a mission consisting of a technical adviser under ILO funding was carried out in December 1997 and January 1998. The mission resulted in a project document, which identifies priority actions that are necessary for the recovery of cooperatives. Remarks made by UNDP in relation to this project were forwarded to the technical adviser.

(e) Meanwhile, and in response to a request from the Central Bank, a project document dealing with the recovery of savings and loans cooperatives is being finalized. Funding for the project is expected from the Canadian cooperation agency, in addition to that provided by UNDP and ILO.

Seminars, conferences and grants during 1997

40. The following were extended:

(a) A grant was extended to a Ministry of Labour official for participation in a course entitled "Appui au Secteur Informel en Afrique Francophone", organized and funded by ILO and held at Turin in December 1997;

(b) A grant was also extended to a Congolese expert for participation in two workshops on the reform of

cooperatives and the promotion of cooperative entrepreneurship. The workshops were organized and funded by ILO in August and September 1997 in Dakar and Cotonou, respectively.

2. Protection of workers

Operational projects

41. The following projects are planned or are under way:

(a) Project ZAI/96/013, entitled "Programme de Renforcement du Système de Protection Sociale" has UNDP funds ($927,000) covering the first year of the project. It might also be facilitated by funding from the World Bank;

(b) The first stage of project ZAI/96/011, entitled "Assistance au Programme de Réinsertion socio-économique et de Prise en charge des Groupes Vulnérables et Marginalisés du Congo", and running for one year, started in March 1998 with UNDP funding ($1,281,519);

(c) Project ZAI/98/010/A/08/11, entitled "Appui à la formulation d'une politique nationale d'intégration des jeunes dans l'effort de reconstruction nationale", has a $162,000 budget;

(d) Formulation of a project on the reinsertion of children-soldiers, is to be implemented with UNICEF funds for the years 1998 and 1999;

(e) Preparation of a project aimed at assisting poor children and women is under way. It is to be implemented with UNICEF funds for the years 1998 and 1999.

3. Promotion of democracy and workers' fundamental rights

Future projects

42. The following projects are planned:

(a) Consultant work by an ILO expert for a programme on capacity-building for negotiations between the Government and its social partners;

(b) A request by the Ministry of Labour and Public Service for an expert mission purported to the rehabilitation of the Ministry;

(c) Planning by ILO and the Human Rights Field Office of aspects of human rights related to the workplace.

Seminars, conferences and grants in 1997 and 1998

43. The following activities were undertaken:

(a) A mission funded by ILO which investigated workers' conditions;

(b) A seminar on the theme "Labour Unions and Development", organized by the Ministry of Labour, was funded by ILO and held in April 1998;

(c) The participation of four government officials in the "Conférence Internationale du Travail" held in Geneva in June 1998 was facilitated by funds extended by UNDP under project RDC/96/013, entitled "Social Security";

(d) Several "Equipe multidisciplinaire pour les pays de l'Afrique Centrale et de l'Afrique de l'Oueste" (EMACO) missions funded by ILO were organized in December 1997 and January 1998 on training; cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises; and employment (including labour-intensive methods).

E. United Nations Development Programme

1. United Nations Development Programme assistance since May 1997

44. Owing to political turmoil in the country, the UNDP assistance programme in the 1990s was implemented in a very difficult environment and was very often interrupted. Several activities were planned and approved as integral parts of the "Programme Intérimaire 1995–1996", but their implementation was delayed until after the fall of the Mobutu regime in May 1997. As the new regime gave way to a new political order, the UNDP assistance programme suffered from the uncertainties of the transition period. Technical assistance activities had to be reinserted into government institutions that had changed. In some areas, the institutional framework that had prevailed during preparatory work prior to May 1997 had vanished and preparatory assistance had to be formulated. UNDP has conveyed to the Government its wish to see these constraints alleviated. Thematic groups on capacity-building have been set up and a mid-term programming framework has been formulated.

Public management, economy and governance

45. In these areas, UNDP has supported the Government through a project aimed at assisting the Government in its efforts to formulate a structural reform plan. Studies were carried out, *inter alia*, in the areas of health, education, tax policy, reform of public enterprises. UNDP also assisted the Government when technical preparation of the Brussels "Friends of the Congo" meeting was under way. Pursuant

to the preparation of structural reforms, a project to assist the Government in its effort to reform the public service was approved in May 1998 and provides assistance to the registration of public servants at central and provincial levels. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the Government's efforts towards national reconstruction through an increased capacity to absorb and effectively allocate external resources, UNDP has extended to the Government its assistance as coordinator of donations.

46. At the Brussels "Friends of the Congo" meeting, UNDP was granted a mandate to help the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to build its public management capacity. Pursuant to that mandate, UNDP has assisted the Government by setting up 10 thematic groups chaired by the concerned government institutions, but also staffed with experts from interested donors. These thematic groups have opted for a participatory approach. As a first result, the evaluation of existing capacity and the identification of needs have so far been carried out by the concerned administrations.

47. The thematic group on macroeconomic management has finalized its emergency programme on capacity-building. The World Bank, the African Capacity-Building Foundation and UNDP have already expressed their willingness to help in this area, and work in the other groups has started. The groups on health and education have already made available the documents that are to be presented and discussed at upcoming workshops, and the groups on social security, mining and energy are about to finalize their reports. On the other hand, the groups dealing with governance, infrastructure, private sector, environment and agriculture have encountered methodological problems and have asked for assistance from consultants. The request is under consideration at the UNDP level.

48. Prior to May 1997, UNDP had started a programme for the preparation of elections that were expected at that time. The programme achieved significant results: needs in human resources and logistics for the implementation of the elections were evaluated and a pilot survey for testing the capacity to identify and register voters was organized. Those results should be of benefit in the preparations for the elections expected in 1999. As far as the private sector is concerned, UNDP has assisted in the formulation of a national programme aimed at supporting the private sector. The document has still to be validated.

Agriculture and rural development

49. In 1997, UNDP, in association with FAO, launched an extensive programme for the recovery of the agricultural and rural sector, with a total budget of US$ 28 million. Moreover, previous UNDP programmes in this sector also yielded positive results in 1997, such as feeder-roads rehabilitation in collaboration with ILO, using a participatory approach and labour-intensive methods. Actions were undertaken to assist the Government in rehabilitating some stations of the country's main agronomic research institute.

Social development

50. Poverty can be observed in all areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With a human development index of 0.381, the country ranks 142nd in the world. Health facilities have been destroyed and diseases that at some time were eradicated are on the rise as a result of poor economic performances that lasted for years and the interruption of foreign assistance by donor countries. The education system has suffered similar setbacks.

51. UNDP has provided assistance in the course of the preparation of the anti-AIDS and anti-sexually-transmitted diseases national programme. The UNDP contribution has been a determinant in the reactivation of activities that were left unattended because of lack of resources. A country-wide information, education and communication campaign was launched and institutional arrangements were strengthened. A national anti-AIDS programme has been drafted. Prior to the formulation of a health policy for the country, a national survey to collect data on medical facilities and human and material resources in the sector is under way. Rehabilitation of medical facilities in the areas affected by the civil war is also under way. The Disease Control Service (Ministry of Health) has benefited from the job training provided to its medical personnel, and from the provision of laboratory equipment.

52. Pursuant to the outcome of the National Forum on the reform of the education sector which was held in 1996, UNDP provided assistance for the elaboration of an investment programme. The implementation of the project suffered several delays, as a result of the worsening political situation in 1996. The project was relaunched after May 1997. In this context, an action plan has been prepared for submission to the "*Comité National de Suivi des Etats Généraux*", a national committee set up to monitor the application of the resolutions of the Forum. The organization of a round table of donors in the sector is envisaged.

53. The fate of women has not been ignored. Following the Beijing Conference on Women in Development, a project on Women's leadership in development was prepared. In the area of social development, a national programme for the

promotion of women is under preparation with UNDP assistance.

54. UNDP has also provided assistance in the formulation of a national action plan on habitat. Approved in January 1998, the project is aimed at strengthening institutional capabilities in the sector; improving the capacity of low-income urban populations to afford land and shelter; and improving public urban infrastructure.

55. Two assistance programmes on social security reform and socio-economic reinsertion of vulnerable groups have been approved in 1997. UNDP is also compiling another assistance programme on poverty, prior to the elaboration of a national programme on poverty alleviation.

Other sectors

56. In the environmental sector, UNDP is extending assistance to the Government for the formulation of a local Agenda 21. A project document on a National Action Plan on Environment has been drafted. In the same sector, two Global Environment Facility projects are under way. These projects provide support to the formulation of national plans on bio-diversity and climatic change. In 1997, three assistance programmes were approved in the transport and communication sectors: rehabilitation of the meteorological system; job training targeting the personnel of civil aviation services; and preparation of a telecommunication master plan. Negotiations are planned between UNDP and the Government to design assistance programmes in the areas of environment, transport and communications.

Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation

57. In the first half of the year, UNDP coordinated humanitarian activities in collaboration with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and a Disaster Management Team consisting of non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies was set up. The team has facilitated the coordination of operations, thus covering the needs of affected populations. In addition, two rehabilitation projects were designed to provide quick response in the areas most affected by civil war and refugees' movements. In the context of this assistance programme, 30 community development projects (16 of which are located in South Kivu) have so far been approved. UNDP was also actively involved in humanitarian emergency operations in 1997, such as seed provision in South Kivu; and emergency operations when Province Orientale was hit by flooding and the outburst of cholera. UNDP is in the process of consulting with local authorities in North Kivu, with the United States Agency for International Development and the Belgian cooperation agency for the rehabilitation of the Sake-Masisi-Walikale road, a conduit that is important to the local economy.

58. UNDP is backing the Government's effort in developing disaster response and prevention measures, and has designed a workshop for government officials and non-governmental organizations.

2. Prospects

59. On 25 May 1998, UNDP and the Government, represented by the Ministry of International Cooperation held a meeting to review ongoing programmes and decided: (a) to adjust the life cycle of UNDP programmes to the Government's "*Programme Triennial Minimum*" and to seek harmony between those programmes and those carried out by other United Nations agencies; and (b) to extend the current programme up to 31 December 1999.

60. It was also suggested at the meeting that UNDP intervention should be focused on four themes: (a) poverty alleviation; (b) macroeconomic management; (c) governance; and (d) environmental management. An increased role by national institutions in the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of the UNDP programme was recommended. The drafting of a framework for cooperation between UNDP and the Government is planned for 1999.

F. United Nations Population Fund

1. Impact of recent socio-political trends on development assistance

61. The year 1997 started in the midst of a civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result, UNFPA was unable to restart its operations in the country. The Government formulated a three-year "*Programme Triennial Minimum*", in which it stated its willingness to restore a sustainable relationship of cooperation with UNFPA. The Fund then reached out to its known and potential partners and focused once again upon the achievement of the goals of the Cairo Action Programme.

62. It is worth mentioning that institutions connected to the issues of population and development, such as the "Comité National Population" had been non-operational for years. In the health sector, the National Programme for Birth Control, which had been operational in a wide area around the country, had had a setback.

63. In order to address the goals stated by the Government in the "*Programme Triennial Minimum*", UNFPA has, in collaboration with the Government, adopted a two-stage strategy, as follows:

(a) Formulation and implementation of a provisional programme for the period 1998–1999. Based on the Government's drive towards national reconstruction and its priorities, the provisional programme will deal with rehabilitation activities and capacity-building in the areas of population and development. As an illustration, UNFPA intervention will focus upon the implementation of the Emergency Programme drafted by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry's programme has set two goals, namely, to reduce maternal mortality and to improve reproduction health;

(b) Launching in 1998 of the process leading to the formulation of a country programme (starting from the year 2000).

2. United Nations Population Fund Activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997

64. In 1997, UNFPA concentrated its efforts on the three priority areas of reproduction health, population and development, and on the resulting action programme.

Reproductive health

Promotion of reproductive health and strategies

65. The Fund supported the following activities for a total budget of $40,450:

(a) Funding of a preparatory national workshop on "Youth Reproduction Health" coordinated by the Ministry of Youth; provision of funds to cover the costs resulting from the participation of a delegation from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the African Forum on Teen Reproductive Health, held in Addis Ababa in January 1997;

(b) Provision of funds to cover the full costs resulting from the participation of delegations from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the following conferences:

(i) Eighth International Conference on Women and Health, held in Rio de Janeiro in March 1997, attended by a member of the "Association des Femmes Médecins";

(ii) Cotonou symposium on the elimination of legal barriers to Sex, Health and Reproduction in French-speaking African countries, attended by two female participants in March 1997;

(iii) Conference on the Reduction of Abortion-related Morbidity and Mortality: organized by the "Confédération Africaine des Associations et Sociétés Médicales"; the conference was attended by two members of the "Conseil de l'Ordre des Médecins" of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Implementation of reproductive health-related projects

66. Within the context of project ZAI/96/P01, entitled "Provision of contraceptives", the following activities, totalling $98,090, were carried out in 1997:

(a) Delivery of contraceptives to the central warehouse of the Birth Control Programme, which houses products supplied by UNFPA in 1996;

(b) Purchasing of computer equipment, vehicles, and medical equipment;

(c) A study to evaluate reproductive health needs in the eastern provinces: Orientale, North Kivu and South Kivu;

(d) Activities related to emergency and solidarity.

Population and development strategies

67. The following activities, totalling $12,300, were undertaken:

(a) Drafting by a group of professors with the Department of Demography, University of Kinshasa of a series of arguments to respond to questions raised on the issues of population and development strategies;

(b) Participation of a delegation from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the "Forum des Parlementaires de Population et Développement des Pays d'Afrique et du Moyen Orient", held in Cape Town in May 1997;

(c) Preparation of the National Conference on Reconstruction;

(d) Organization of Population Day. National media gave coverage to an address on "Teens' Reproduction Health" delivered by the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system, on behalf of the UNFPA Representative, who was out of town;

(e) Support of commemorative activities to a group of non-governmental organizations;

(f) Participation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the International Symposium on Health, Productivity and Development, held in Abidjan in March 1997.

Gender, population and development

68. The Fund supported the following activities, totalling $8,430, in the context of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women:

(a) Participation of a government official in United Nations sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held in New York in July 1997;

(b) In the context of capacity-building for women, UNFPA has attended:

(i) The organization by a group of female non-governmental organizations of a workshop on the theme "Femmes et Election: Quel rôle jouer?", held in March 1997;

(ii) The participation of two government officials in the "Assemblée Internationale des Organismes Familiaux", held in Brazil in December 1997;

(iii) The organization by the "Association des Femmes Médecins" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in December 1997 of "Women and Health" Days on the theme "The future of the small girl";

Inter-agency activities

69. As a member of thematic groups, the Office took part in:

(a) The commemoration in December of World AIDS Day with the HIV/AIDS group;

(b) The United Nations Week on poverty alleviation organized in October by the thematic group on poverty alleviation. The central warehouse of the Ministry of Health was rehabilitated; supply of sterilization equipment to some medical facilities (Maternity of Kintambo, "Libota Lilamu Centre" of the Birth Control Programme).

3. Publications

70. UNFPA has supported the following publication activities:

(a) A book containing a series of responses to questions raised on the issues of population and development strategies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(b) The report of the "Atelier National sur la Préparation de la Jeunesse au prochain millénaire – Défi de la Santé de la Reproduction";

(c) The report of the workshop on "Femmes et Elections: Quel rôle à jouer?".

G. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

71. UNHCR interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997 centred upon three areas:

(a) Assistance provided to refugees on Congolese territory;

(b) Repatriation operations;

(c) Comprehensive humanitarian programme in Eastern Congo.

1. Assistance to refugees

72. The Democratic Republic of the Congo shares borders with nine different countries. Political instability in some of these neighbouring countries (Angola, Rwanda, Uganda) has sent important movements of refugees back and forth across borders. UNHCR has undertaken several projects to assist refugees (for a total budget of $4,278,140):

(a) Integration of 130,111 Angolan refugees as well as others of different nationalities in Kinshasa and the two provinces of Lower Congo and Katanga;

(b) Emergency assistance to refugees from Congo-Brazzaville in Kinshasa (Kinkole);

(c) Integration of 61,192 Sudanese and Ugandan refugees in Province Orientale;

(d) Reinsertion of refugees in other countries;

(e) Assistance provided to these refugees also includes health care and education (primary to university levels).

2. Repatriation operations

73. After Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire forces entered Kinshasa announcing the end of the civil war and the restoration of trust in the relationships between the Governments of Congo and Rwanda, Congolese and Rwandan refugees were voluntarily repatriated to their respective countries. Details of repatriation operations, which cost $16,841,656, are as follows:

(a) Repatriation of Angolan refugees;

(b) Repatriation of refugees from Congo-Brazzaville;

(c) Repatriation of 57,800 Burundian and Rwandan refugees from the Congolese cities of Goma, Bukavu, Uvira, Kisangani, Mbandaka and Mbuji-Mayi.

3. Comprehensive humanitarian assistance programme in eastern Congo

74. The presence of large numbers of refugees in Eastern Congo has generated a series of problems to which UNHCR responded with a "comprehensive humanitarian assistance programme" in that part of the country. A total of 345 projects have been implemented in the two provinces of North Kivu (Goma) and South Kivu (Bukavu and Uvira). The projects covered several areas, such as:

(a) Agriculture: production and distribution of seeds; distribution of farming tools;

(b) Sanitation: refugee centres had to be cleaned and closed after refugees had left;

(c) Water: supply of water, chlorine and cisterns;

(d) Livestock breeding: provision of livestock and vaccine;

(e) Environment: tree nurseries, reforestation in the areas previously occupied by refugees, rehabilitation of national parks (Virunga, Kahuzi Biega);

(f) Infrastructure: construction of bridges, rehabilitation of roads, markets and slaughterhouses;

(g) Health: rehabilitation of health centres and hospitals; supply of drugs to pharmacies;

(h) Social development: income-generating activities, job training, assistance to internally displaced people.

H. United Nations Children's Fund

75. The UNICEF cooperation programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the period 1996–1997 targeted a limited number of goals: to improve the accessibility to health and education services in the seven provinces where 65 per cent of the total population live; implement activities related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, because of the worsening of the socio-political situation, UNICEF had to undertake more emergency activities.

1. Emergency programme

76. In responding to the situation in the eastern part of the country, UNICEF opened an emergency office in Kisangani and reopened its office in Uvira (South Kivu). These field offices enabled UNICEF to develop an intervention approach covering three areas: assistance to the 400,000 Burundian and Rwandan refugees who were fleeing the conflict; assistance to 200,000 internally displaced families; rehabilitation of education and health services and food reserves which were looted during the conflict. This emergency programme was implemented in collaboration with UNHCR and WFP for a total budget of $13,343,000.

77. At the end of the conflict, UNICEF decided to maintain an independent structure for emergency operations in the four eastern provinces (North Kivu, South Kivu, Orientale, Maniema) up to the end of the year.

78. Since 17 May 1997, emergency assistance has centred upon immunization campaigns (polio/measles); assistance to unaccompanied children and to children requiring special protection; rehabilitation of social facilities; such as health centres, maternity hospitals and schools in the areas that were most affected by war in the four eastern provinces. Emergency assistance was also extended to the victims of inter-ethnic conflicts in the Masisi and Uvira-Fizi regions.

79. When civil war erupted in Brazzaville in early June, 70,000 Congolese fled to Kinshasa. Of this group, 30,000 were housed at the UNHCR refugee centre at Kinkole. The UNICEF Kinshasa office, in collaboration with the personnel of the UNICEF Brazzaville office attended to the protection needs of women and children in the refugee camp. UNICEF also provided vaccines against measles, vitamin A and psycho-therapeutic care to children, additional food to malnourished children and sick people, equipment for elementary education, nutrition education for pregnant and breastfeeding women, prenatal care and equipment for the establishment of a maternity clinic in the camp.

2. Health programme

80. The health situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo showed no sign of improvement in 1997. The deterioration of the health sector, which was left unattended for two decades, was so advanced that the efforts made since May 1997 have not been sufficient to reverse the trend.

81. The general objective of the health programme was to reduce infantile mortality and maternal mortality rates. Four projects were formulated in this respect: strengthening of elementary health care; development of the Expanded Programme of Immunization; AIDS prevention; and promotion of health/nutrition. The total budget of the programme amounts to $3,307,000.

82. Immunization activities did not suffer from constraints resulting from the war situation in the eastern part of the country. But special activities, such as local vaccination days against polio and measles organized in 46 cities and towns across the country were favoured at the cost of routine immunization activities. The coverage ratio for these activities was very high, 95 per cent of children under the age of five were immunized against polio.

83. Activities related to HIV/AIDS prevention were concentrated in Kinshasa and carried out in collaboration with local non-governmental organizations. Some 1.2 million young people aged between 10 and 18 were advised on the modes of transmission and methods of prevention against HIV/AIDS through an information campaign.

84. Activities related to the last project (promotion of health/nutrition) centred upon the promotion of safe childbirth. These activities were concentrated in a hospital that will serve as a model for future experiences.

3. Nutrition programme

85. Data collected in March 1995 show high levels of malnutrition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; malnutrition is the fourth cause of death for children, after malaria, diarrhoea, and respiratory diseases. Several factors explain the magnitude of malnutrition in the country: food insecurity, a low level of breastfeeding and poor health care.

86. The UNICEF nutrition programme ($236,000) is aimed at reducing children's mortality, morbidity, nutrient deficiencies and (proteino-energetic) malnutrition. To achieve these objectives, UNICEF advocates the improvement of children's diet through the promotion of breastfeeding, community participation in fighting malnutrition and reduction of vitamin A, iron, nutrient and iodine deficiencies.

87. While the action plan that was prepared could not be implemented as envisaged because of the war situation, some operations did take place: vitamin A was distributed to children aged between 9 and 59 months on special local vaccination days, 2,145,761 children in 47 cities were targeted and the coverage ratio ranged between 50 and 100 per cent.

4. Education programme

88. The cost of education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is now borne exclusively by parents because of a lack of public resources. School facilities are physically crumbling. The poor quality of education, especially in public schools, the absence of incitement on the part of teachers and the lack of textbooks have reduced the quality of teachers' performance and students' records.

89. Preparation of the UNICEF action plan for 1997 was completed in July 1997.

90. The project dealing with formal education has a budget of $1,049,000 and aims at improving accessibility to schools and the quality of education. The project is designed around five strategies: community mobilization, action on supply of education, action on demand for education, teachers' training and community participation. The project covers five provinces and targets 2,000 teachers, 130 school headmasters and 80,000 students. So far, the following activities have been implemented: training of trainers, school headmasters and teachers; provision of school equipment, books and desks.

91. In Kasaï Oriental between 300,000 and 400,000 children are being diverted from school and attracted towards diamond extraction and/or trade. In Mbuji Mayi alone 45,000 children work in diamond mines and do not attend school. In collaboration with the German Committee, UNICEF has launched a project entitled "Enfants des mines" to address the situation. Several activities have been selected in relation to this project: formal and non-formal education activities, supply of school equipment to the schools and three non-governmental organizations which take care of the children concerned, training of 36 teachers and food supply to the beneficiaries.

5. Water and sanitation programme

92. Water-borne diseases are on the rise, mainly because of poor water supply infrastructure (only 26 per cent of rural households have access to clean drinking water), poor sanitation conditions (only 6 per cent of rural households use latrines) and also because of certain individual behaviours.

93. The Water and Sanitation Programme ($502,000) was launched in four provinces (Lower Congo, Kasaï Oriental, Kasaï Occidental, Katanga). Its general objective is to increase the proportion of households with access to clean water and sanitation services. The construction of physical structures is very expensive and their impact on health is limited. For that reason, the programme has been reoriented towards activities which can alter people's behaviour in relation to water and sanitation.

6. Information and communication programme

94. The communication department has been successful in spreading the UNICEF message on conditions of women

and children across the country. Television stations have covered UNICEF activities, especially emergency operations.

95. The National Committee for Children was created in 1994, but became operational only in 1996. Under the chairmanship of the Minister of Health, the Committee for Children's Rights is made up of representatives from all the ministries and non-governmental organizations. A seminar on children's rights was held in November 1997.

96. Pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 74 radio and television programmes for children were organized in Kinshasa. Similar activities were tentatively carried out in some provinces.

97. Considering the political turmoil that affected the country during the first semester of 1997, UNICEF was unable to fully implement its cooperation programme. After dialogue with the Government and its partners was restored in the aftermath of May 1997, UNICEF was credited with some successful operations, especially in the area of immunization against polio and measles.

98. The UNICEF emergency and rehabilitation programme has enabled the agency to respond to the needs of refugees and internally displaced people. The distribution of school and health kits in the war-affected regions has contributed to the rehabilitation of social services.

I. World Food Programme

99. The economic decline of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had reached a new low when per capita gross domestic product was recorded at $117. Largely dependent on mining, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had also become dependent on imported food. Agricultural production had declined and urban unemployment rate was on the rise as a result of an inefficient agricultural policy.

100. In 1997, WFP responded to the needs of about 1.5 million people; more than 25,000 tons of food were distributed.

1. World Food Programme interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

101. WFP has been actively involved in large-scale programmes to rehabilitate local ecosystems and to alleviate poverty in order to ensure food security to the local population. At the end of the conflict, WFP shifted its interventions from emergency operations towards assistance provided to local micro-projects. In Kisangani, Goma, Bukavu, and Uvira, WFP has assisted "food for work" projects designed to protect seeds, rehabilitate rural roads, protect national parks, reforest certain areas, etc. About 15,000 people take part in these micro-projects. In mid-November 1997, a project aimed at increasing rice cultivation in Pool Malebo (Kinshasa) was launched; 60 per cent of the participants are women heads of households. It is expected that the project could supply 15,000 tons of paddy rice and 1,500 tons of vegetables to Kinshasa. WFP has invested $2.5 million in the project for a period of two years.

2. Evaluation of the 1997 programme

102. WFP is satisfied with its accomplishments for 1997. More importantly, the agency has tested its ability to move from emergency operations towards development activities, as illustrated by the above-mentioned micro-projects.

103. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is now set on the path of national reconstruction and WFP has adapted its assistance programme to fit this reality. Emergency operations which dominated WFP intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the last four years are giving way to development operations.

104. WFP is contributing to human resource development through its micro-projects and its assistance projects in Goma, Bukavu, Uvira, Kisangani, Mbuji-Mayi, and Kinshasa. Women and children involved in these projects are provided with nutrition and health education and food. Some 150,000 people are the beneficiaries of this programme, which focuses on reducing malnutrition and improving sanitation conditions. Sanitation projects are under consideration for the least endowed areas of Kinshasa.

105. WFP intervention in Kinshasa and in the eastern part of the country has concentrated on the environment, agricultural production and construction and maintenance of rural roads.

106. WFP uses a participatory and bottom-up approach in all its interventions. To avoid the emergence of behaviours such as dependence on aid, WFP has limited the scope of its interventions in time and space. Food aid is viewed at WFP as a means to achieve food security. Therefore, more than 90 per cent of the foodstuffs acquired by WFP are purchased locally, in order to provide incentives to farmers.

107. WFP projects have also tapped into the opportunities offered by the private sector (food purchases, warehousing, transport), local communities (community participation in food production), development actors (non-governmental

organizations, religious and charitable institutions), private individuals and the Government.

108. In 1997, the local media associated WFP with community projects in such areas as: income-generating activities, nutrition, education and training, rural roads, environment, sanitation, food security.

109. Since November 1997, the WFP office in Kinshasa has been linked to the world and to field offices around the country through the Internet. Some 18 e-mail personal addresses are available, in addition to the addresses of the field offices at Goma, Bukavu, and Uvira. Therefore, WFP is quite advanced in electronic communication, a clear advantage when quick responses are needed in times of emergency.

110. WFP has increased contacts with the local press, inviting journalists to the signing ceremonies of agreements reached with the Government and ensuring fair coverage of its food-distribution operations.

J. World Health Organization

Evaluation of World Health Organization interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997

Strategic assistance

111. WHO has continuously assisted the Ministry of Health, with which it has regular and permanent contacts, as illustrated by the following actions:

(a) Direct involvement of officials from the Ministry in the preparation of the budget programme for the period 1996–1997 and in the planning stage of six projects presented by the Ministry;

(b) Assistance provided to the Ministry for the third evaluation of the programme "Santé pour Tous d'ici à l'an 2000";

(c) Collection of data needed to provide a profile of health conditions in the Congo (the first operation was launched in Kinshasa);

(d) Setting up of an inter-agency meeting, to serve as a forum for consultation and guidance in health sector interventions.

112. With WHO technical assistance, the Ministry of Health has started a programme aimed at reforming the sector. A project to assist health services in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been prepared and funded, and is expected to result in the restructuring of the Ministry; definition of global and specific health policies; and formulation of a guiding plan.

Operational assistance

113. Personnel within the WHO office contributes on a regular basis to national activities in the health sector, and devote 50 per cent of their work time to contacts with partners within the Ministry.

114. Technical and logistic assistance extended to various health programmes is illustrated by:

(a) Meetings with partners, either within the office premises or in the partners' premises;

(b) Field missions, with or without partners;

(c) Missions overseas;

(d) Facilitation provided at training sessions, seminars and workshops organized around the country.

115. The contribution of WHO is more obvious through direct interventions in the field in times of emergency. In 1997, WHO intervened in the following situations:

(a) Surveillance of haemorrhagic fever;

(b) Surveillance of the Ebola virus in Kikwit;

(c) Monkey-Pox in Sankuru;

(d) Polio in Kasaï Oriental;

(e) Epidemics control;

(f) Bacterial dysentery in Bandundu;

(g) Meningitis in Katanga and Maniema;

(h) Cholera in the camps for refugees and internally displaced people;

(i) Assistance to displaced people and refugees.

116. Because of frequent outbreaks of epidemics and the necessity to engage in emergency operations in the country, seven provincial field offices were tasked to assist the Ministry in the provinces with high epidemiological risks, namely, Bandundu, Kasaï Occidental, Equateur, Province Orientale, North Kivu, South Kivu and Katanga.

Scientific assistance

117. WHO has contributed to several surveys, studies and research projects, as follows:

(a) Investigations on the Ebola virus and polio;

(b) Evaluation mission on Monkey-Pox in Sankuru;

(c) Prevalence study on (onchocercose) endemics;

(d) Study on the resistance to anti-malaria drugs in Kinshasa;

(e) Ethno-cultural study on AIDS.

118. WHO has supported the publication of several monographs, including "Rapport du Séminaire Atelier sur la Politique Pharmaceutique Nationale", "Rapport de la troisième Evaluation de la Mise en Oeuvre de Santé pour Tous d'ici l'an 2000", "Enquête dans les ménages à Kinshasa", "Préparation et Réponses aux Situations d'Urgence et Catastrophes au Zaïre – Plan Stratégique National", "Module VIH – Développement" and "Actualisation de la Stratégie de la Santé Pour Tous".

Resource mobilization

119. National experts of a good quality are a prerequisite for a successful implementation of programmes. All projects are prepared in a participatory approach with experts from the Ministry of Health.

120. Six large projects for the Ministry of Health have been formulated: a total of $5,120,000 provided by UNDP and the Belgian Government are expected to be available for four of them.

Programme management

121. Since 1996–1997, the WHO assistance programme has been managed in collaboration with the Ministry. Planning and evaluation of the programme budget are carried out by a commission staffed with 20 members representing WHO member countries, representatives of special services under the supervision of the Ministry, and representatives of the Office of the Secretary-General of the Ministry.

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Human rights questions: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Situation of human rights in Afghanistan

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly a brief interim report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan prepared by Mr. Choong-Hyun Paik, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/145 of 12 December 1997 and Economic and Social Council decision 1998/267 of 30 July 1998.

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Annex

Interim report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/145 and Economic and Social Council decision 1998/267

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I. Introduction

1. A Special Rapporteur was first appointed to examine the human rights situation in Afghanistan in 1984 by the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, who had been requested to do so by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1984/37 of 24 May 1984. Since then, the mandate has been renewed regularly by resolutions of the Commission, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council, in which the Special Rapporteur was requested to submit reports to the Commission and to the General Assembly. The former are contained in documents E/CN.4/1985/21, E/CN.4/1986/24, E/CN.4/1987/22, E/CN.4/1988/25, E/CN.4/1989/24, E/CN.4/1990/25, E/CN.4/1991/31, E/CN.4/1992/33, E/CN.4/1993/42, E/CN.4/1994/53, E/CN.4/1995/64, E/CN.4/1996/64, E/CN.4/1997/59 and E/CN.4/1998/71 and the latter in the annexes to documents A/40/843, A/41/778, A/42/667 and Corr.1, A/43/742, A/44/669, A/45/664, A/46/606, A/47/656, A/48/584, A/49/650, A/50/567, A/51/481 and A/52/493. Mr. Choong-Hyun Paik was appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan in April 1995.

2. In its resolution 1998/70 of 21 April 1998, the Commission on Human Rights decided to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for one year, an extension that was approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1998/267 of 30 July 1998.

3. Owing to the security situation in the area at the time when the Special Rapporteur planned to carry out his visit, he was unable to travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan, as initially intended, prior to finalizing the present report. In view of the events that took place in northern Afghanistan in August 1998, in particular in the city of Mazar-I-Sharif, the Special Rapporteur endeavoured to obtain the most credible information possible from reliable sources on the events that took place there. He succeeded in doing so, and decided to draft a memorandum containing allegations of violations of human rights that he subsequently submitted to the representatives of the Taliban movement for comments and observations. Both the memorandum and the reply thereto are reproduced in full below.

II. Memorandum

4. The following is the memorandum drafted by the Special Rapporteur:

Allegations of violations of human rights

Mazar-I-Sharif

According to the information received from credible sources, after the takeover of Mazar-I-Sharif on 8 August 1998 by the Taliban and other forces allied with them, widespread killings and atrocities took place in the city. Particularly affected were the inherent right to life; the right to liberty and security of person; the right not to be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to liberty of movement; the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; religious observance and worship; and the rights of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. The Hazara ethnic minority was principally targeted, although not exclusively.

On the first day of the takeover, Taliban forces carried out with machine guns widespread, random and indiscriminate killings without warning of anyone they saw moving on the streets, as well as people looking out their windows or in their doorways. Those killed included men, women, children and the elderly, regardless of their ethnic and religious

identity. Even such animals as donkeys, goats and sheep were killed. Since the streets were crowded with people going about their normal daily life, numerous shopkeepers, beggars and 35 boys selling soft drinks in the street were killed in this manner. One witness hid in a place with some 25 other civilians. All were seriously interrogated, and nine Hazaras were shot on the spot and thrown into a well. The words "killing frenzy" have been used often by witnesses in describing the killings referred to above. The streets were soon covered with dead bodies and blood. The arbitrary and indiscriminate killing and shooting lasted the whole first day. Bodies remained on the streets for between four days and one week before inhabitants were allowed to remove them. A number of combatants may have been killed on this occasion.

The 10 Iranian diplomats and a correspondent of the IRNA press agency were killed on the first day of the takeover of Mazar-I-Sharif, when Taliban forces and persons allied with them, including those described as "Punjabi Taliban", entered the Iranian Consulate. Their bodies remained in the building for two days before being buried in a mass grave in the compound of the Sultan Razia Girls' High School. The group which killed the Iranians was led by a person named Mullah Fazel Ahmed or Fazel Mohammed, a senior Taliban commander.

The second day after the arrival of the Taliban forces at Mazar-I-Sharif and the indiscriminate killing and shooting, loudspeakers and radio were used in the streets announcing that the population should inform the authorities of any Hazaras and weapons that were hidden. Taliban forces and the persons allied with them started to search systematically, house-to-house, for members of the Hazara ethnic minority in all neighbourhoods known to be inhabited by them. Most search groups consisted of a Taliban leader and five Balkh Pashtun informers who led them to specific houses. The search groups also looked for money and other valuables, which they then stole. They asked persons who were not Hazaras and whose houses were searched to point out houses inhabited by Hazaras. Some persons were forced to accompany the search groups and point out Hazara homes. One person was imprisoned for 20 days for trying to prevent the arrest of a Hazara civilian. The districts inhabited by Hazaras where the uprising against Taliban forces began in May 1997 were particularly targeted. All killings were seen as systematic, planned and very well organized.

Numerous summary executions were carried out in the worst-hit districts, and many other inhabitants were taken away. All areas of Mazar-I-Sharif inhabited by Hazaras were subjected to intensive searches. In some cases, if the search party saw that the person opening the door was a Hazara, they were shot on the spot. Hazaras were killed despite assurances by street representatives that they were civilians and had no political affiliations. In the Ilmarab neighbourhood, 170 persons, including women and children, were killed in a few hours; 230 bodies were buried at Budhky. Some of the persons who were killed were shot three times (twice in the head and once in the chest, or, once in the head, once in the chest and once in the groin) and then had their throats slit in the halal manner.

When the Taliban arrived in the Saidabad neighbourhood on the third day after their takeover of Mazar-I-Sharif, they gave the inhabitants 20 minutes to bring their weapons to the nearest mosque. In Saidabad and Dasht-I-Shor, the Taliban forces shot all Hazaras, including women, children and old men. Witnesses stated that there were more than 100 corpses between Saidabad junction and the prison, and many others in the side streets. Shooting was heard for a number of days, and many bodies were left unburied in the houses. Many other dead bodies were lying in the street, and walls were stained with blood. A number of women and girls were raped and abducted in the Saidabad and Alichopan

neighbourhoods, mostly by the Balkh Taliban, but this form of violence against women was not widespread.

An Uzbek woman from Darwaz-I-Shadyan neighbourhood saw her son killed before her eyes because the Taliban thought he was a Hazara. A Hazara man from the same neighbourhood who tried to flee was killed by the Taliban with a bayonet driven through his head, face and eyes. A candy maker in the same neighbourhood was killed in his house together with 12 family members, including women, children and old men. Those who killed them spoke Kandahari Pashtu and Urdu, and were not able to speak Persian well. A vegetable seller in Mandai neighbourhood was killed by being beaten on the head with a stick. Many witnesses stated that the Taliban knew exactly where to go and even knew which houses were owned by Hazaras. Empty Hazara houses, whose occupants had fled, were arrested or had been killed, were marked with a stick and a white flag as belonging to the Taliban. It is estimated that there were thousands of such houses. Persons who tried to enter them were arrested or shot.

Houses belonging to persons who were not Hazaras located near neighbourhoods inhabited by members of the Hazara ethnic minority were also searched for Hazaras and weapons. All male Hazaras were arrested during the first two days. The persons picking up Hazaras randomly on the streets were said to be Balkh Pashtuns formerly affiliated with the Hezb-I-Islami party. Taliban forces still continue to look for young male Hazaras possessing weapons and who may have been affiliated with the Hezb-I-Wahadat political party. One way of determining who was a Hazara and a Shia Moslem was to ask them how many verses of the Qur'an they recited during prayers. Those giving the answer that would correspond to Shias were arrested on the spot.

It is estimated that approximately 3,000 Hazaras were executed summarily, in their homes or in the street, during the first six days after the Taliban takeover of Mazar-I-Sharif on 8 August 1998. The persons arrested and/or killed were mostly men and boys, if they looked old enough to fight. Some 700 persons who had been arrested are said to have been killed at Dasht-I-Hairatan. It is estimated that a very large number of opposition fighters, possibly as much as 3,000, who had just arrived at Mazar-I-Sharif, were trapped in Zeinabad district and were more or less wiped out. Witnesses stated that the Taliban had issued instructions that the bodies of the Hezb-I-Wahadat fighters from Bamyan province and of other Hazaras should be left on the streets until they were attacked by animals. The estimated number of persons killed in the city of Mazar-I-Sharif is approximately 4,000 to 5,000. The number of military casualties was thought to be similar. The estimated total number of killings so far ranges between 5,000 and 8,000.

A group of between 200 and 250 Hazara men who had been arrested by the Taliban forces were taken to the grave of the Hezb-I-Wahadat leader Mazari and killed there. Mazari's grave was subsequently destroyed by the Taliban. In addition, some 300 persons are estimated to have been killed in the Sultan Razia High School. The "Mazari" camp for internally displaced persons from Kabul was blown up twice by the Taliban forces after 250 persons were killed there.

Male Hazaras who were not killed immediately in their houses with members of their families were taken away. Numerous prisoners belonging to the Hazara ethnic minority were placed in metal containers that were left in the sunshine during the day and subsequently taken to Shebergan at dusk. Some were badly beaten before being placed in containers. Most persons thus exposed inside containers suffocated. The number of containers heading towards Shebergan varied. It is estimated that 10 to 12 containers filled with Hazaras were taken to Shebergan during the first six days after 8 August 1998. Each container was filled with 110 to 130 prisoners. Witnesses saw containers opened with all men in them dead from

suffocation. In others, only 10 or 20 persons remained alive. One witness saw the opening of three containers carrying 120 persons, of whom only three had survived the trip to Shebergan. Plastic-covered lorries were used to transport prisoners from Mazar-I-Sharif to Shebergan. Many, possibly several thousand persons, were brought to Hairatan and Shebergan for investigation, and most are believed to have been killed. Persons unable to speak at least a little of the Pashto language were thought to be unlikely to survive an interrogation. One witness was tortured and his fingernails torn out. Some containers were filled with children (boys and girls), who were taken to an unknown destination after their parents had been killed.

Mass killings took place during the first two weeks after the takeover of Mazar-I-Sharif by the Taliban forces. Subsequently, only persons denounced to the Taliban by members of the local Pashtun community were detained or killed. A number of locations outside Mazar-I-Sharif were used for killing prisoners, who were buried in several mass graves. The existence of mass graves where Hazaras from Mazar-I-Sharif were buried after being executed or killed by the Taliban forces was reported in the desert area of Dasht-I-Laili, located between the cities of Shebergan and Maimana, 130 kilometres west of Mazar-I-Sharif, the site of an alleged massacre of Taliban prisoners of war in 1997. One witness who was not a Hazara and who went to look for his son in Mazar-I-Sharif prison was told that he had been transferred to Shebergan. In Shebergan, he was told that he should look for his son in Dasht-I-Laili. When he arrived, he saw thousands of corpses there, including that of his son, whose throat had been slit. The killings at Dasht-I-Laili may have continued.

Early in the morning on 9 August 1998, lorries were parked in front of Shia mosques, and all those coming out were placed in them and taken to the prison. In the Karte Ariana neighbourhood of Mazar-I-Sharif, men were told to go to the mosque and pray. When they came out, all 150 of them were put in containers and taken to an unknown destination. Shias and Hazaras were told that they should pray the same way as Sunni Moslems if they wanted to stay in Mazar-I-Sharif and survive. The loudspeakers of all mosques were used to call on the surviving members of the Shia Moslem community at Mazar-I-Sharif to convert to Sunni Islam and to attend prayers five times a day, for their own sake, "unless they wanted to be treated like dogs and shot on the spot". The Governor of Mazar-I-Sharif appointed by the Taliban, Maulavi Niazi, is said to have announced that Hazaras should stop following the religion of the Islamic Republic of Iran and that they should become true Moslems. Mullah Niazi announced that "Hazaras can live with us. They have three choices: they can become Sunni, they can go to the Islamic Republic of Iran, or they can be killed." Mullah Niazi's announcement broadcast from a mosque in Kocha Istalifi village stated that Hazaras should become proper Moslems of pay (or *bawj*, a payment to be made by non-Moslems) or leave Afghanistan. The following message was broadcast during a sermon from the central mosque at Mazar-I-Sharif: "If Iranians do not believe in the 12 verses of the Qur'an, if anyone does not believe in even one of the verses in the Qur'an, they will be deemed unbelievers. They are liable to be killed." Witnesses stated that the term "Iranians" was clearly meant to depict all Shia Moslems and not Iranian nationals. Mullah Niazi also mentioned the killings of May 1997, and made an explicit link, blaming Hazaras for killing the Taliban. People were being forced to recite a particular Sunni poem. Some Hazaras have been seen going to Sunni mosques. In addition, it was announced from the mosques that anyone who sheltered a Hazara will face the same fate as the Hazara.

It has been indicated that the Taliban leader, Amir Mohammad Omar, had issued a fatwa (religious ruling) stating that the killing of Shia Moslems is not a crime because they are *kafirs* (non-believers).

Many people were arrested and detained initially, regardless of their ethnic origin. In prison, prisoners were segregated according to their ethnic group. Hazaras were separated from the rest and placed in the "political" section. This was done by Taliban from Kandahar, who could easily be identified by their clothes and way of speaking. Pashtuns were released. Tajiks and Uzbeks were released upon issuance of a letter from the Governor's office. Detainees were beaten with cables in order to admit possessing weapons or to disclose where weapons were kept. At least one person was beaten to death by a cable. Other prisoners were beaten in front of the corpse. The number of prisoners increased on a daily basis, soon reaching approximately 3,000. Two or three 40-foot lorries transported Hazara prisoners towards Shebergan every day, and many subsequently to Dasht-I-Laili. One week after the takeover of Mazar-I-Sharif by the Taliban forces, crowds gathered in front of the prison asking for the release of their relatives. If the relatives were not in the prison, they were told by the Taliban to look for them at Shebergan, and if they were not there at Dasht-I-Laili.

In another area of northern Afghanistan under Taliban control, one 10-year-old and one 12-year-old boy were killed by being hit on the head with rifle butts and then shot. Their mother, who pleaded with the fighters, was also killed by being hit on the head with rifle butts. The surviving family members were not allowed to bury their dead relatives. The Taliban then looted the house and took all valuables.

The houses of persons belonging to other ethnic minorities were targeted individually. Houses of known military commanders belonging to other ethnic minorities (Tajik, Uzbek) were searched, and some of the men were arrested and detained. Most were being transferred to Shebergan. Otherwise, Tajiks and Uzbeks were only arrested if the Taliban suspected them of something. According to witnesses, people were also picked up for such reasons as not greeting a Talib.

For several days, Taliban forces prevented the inhabitants of Mazar-I-Sharif from leaving the city. Numerous checkpoints were set up, and vehicles and luggage were searched thoroughly. The Taliban manning these check posts were looking for and asking about military commanders. Hazaras were taken out of the vehicles and shot or taken away. Taliban manning certain checkpoints used sticks with wax at one end which they pushed up the sleeves of suspicious persons to check if men had underarm hair, which they are against, in order to identify them more easily. Checkpoints were not only set up in and around the city but in all areas under the control of the Taliban forces. A Taliban at one such checkpoint stated that Hazaras would invariably end up being killed. In addition, roads into the city and roads leading to Tajikistan were blocked. It is estimated that some 10,000 to 12,000 people fled Mazar-I-Sharif on 8 August 1998. Once a column of persons fleeing the city had reached the desert to the south of Mazar-I-Sharif, they were bombed by a Taliban fighter jet, fired on by multiple rocket launchers from within the city and chased by fast pick-up vehicles. This group may have included some combatants. The road was so packed with cars and people that vehicles drove over the bodies of persons killed during the bombing raids. After that, no movement outside the city was possible during two weeks.

Hazara property was also looted on the roads by local commanders affiliated with the Taliban, who claimed that they had the right to do so since Hazaras were not Moslems but infidels. Hazara men stopped by the Taliban at checkpoints in various parts of the country were on occasion beaten with cables. The situation was worst around Mazar-I-Sharif. When a doll was found in the luggage of one family, the Taliban called them Buddhists and infidels, and shouted that Hazaras and Shia Moslems were non-believers and should go to the Islamic Republic of Iran, China or Mongolia. The men were beaten with steel cables. Hazara men who were arrested at checkpoints and brought to the security office at Kandahar survived on a single piece of bread each day, and were severely beaten at night. Their necks

were chained, and their feet and hands tied together with chains while they were beaten. At the Taliban checkpost near the Pakistani border, men have been arrested and beaten for two hours. The Taliban stated clearly that they would not allow any Hazaras from Mazar-I-Sharif or Bamyan to cross into Pakistan. Many Hazara families who managed to cross the border often did so without their male members. For example, two men who happened to be travelling with a woman not related to them who had a photograph were arrested near the border. The Taliban are approaching Hazaras who managed to cross into Pakistan and offering to facilitate the release of their relatives for large sums of money. Some 2,000 Hazaras who were caught by the Taliban trying to leave Afghanistan are currently detained by the Taliban at Jalalabad.

Property belonging to Hazaras was looted and their land distributed to Pashtuns. The Taliban announced that in areas inhabited by Hazaras and Pashtuns, Hazara land should be distributed to Pashtun nomads.

The premises of international aid agencies at Mazar-I-Sharif were broken into and looted as well. In addition, Taliban search groups led by Balkh Pashtuns were taken to the homes of aid agency personnel for the purpose of looting and searching for money. Radio equipment and vehicles continue to be confiscated.

Bamyan province and surrounding areas

In the Sheikh Ali and Ali Khan districts in the Ghorband Valley, more than 1,000 villagers were massacred, including men, women and children. Bodies were lying on the streets, some directly in front of their houses, which would imply that they had been called out by the Taliban and then shot dead. The pattern of the killings observed showed that men, women and male children were shot, while baby girls were kicked or beaten to death. Similar killings took place in the Inkal and Lolem Shah districts.

Other accounts speak of the massacre of some 800 persons, mostly civilians, in the Hazarajat region on 13 or 14 September 1998.

According to some accounts, an elderly Pashtun woman had hidden 25 Hazara women and children in her basement. One day, a Talib in the market noticed that she was buying a large quantity of bread and followed her to her home. He killed the Pashtun woman first and then all of the Hazara women and children in her basement.

It is estimated that there are some 5,000 internally displaced families from Mazar-I-Sharif, Bamyan province and the south Hazarajat region. Some 2,000 among them are believed to be lacking food.

III. Reply to the memorandum

5. By note verbale dated 21 October 1998, the Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan at Islamabad transmitted an unofficial translation of a note issued by the Leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan on human rights at Mazar-I-Sharif, in reply to the Special Rapporteur's memorandum, which read as follows:

A brief look at the imaginary report on the situation of human rights at Mazar-I-Sharif prepared by Choong-Hyun Paik

It seems that the author has travelled before to Afghanistan; however, instead of knowing the country he has tried to know the opponents well. This is because if an Afghan tries to read his report, suddenly he will find out that the author is going in the wrong direction. He inspires those who act contrary to the wish of human rights, and according to his claims these wrongdoers are totally dedicated to human rights and have performed extraordinary services in this respect.

It is emphasized that if the judgement is made on this report by some impartial, realistic and acknowledged individual, then right away the conclusion is drawn that he has not verified a single point of what he has claimed but most likely has relied on anecdotes and baseless reports of the press or on the false stories of opponents. It must be mentioned that there are a few points which are accurate, such as the killing and detention of military personnel, the collection of arms and the temporary evacuation of some places. But the rest of the explanations and accusations are simply a vast propaganda which only provokes baseless prejudices and brainwashes the people. For example, he takes up matters such as: "With a Pashtun lady certain affairs were done".

The author has tried to adjust his novel-styled report to attract the attention of the reader.

And as to the suggestion that the opponents of the Islamic Emirate have obviously committed different crimes in various forms, has the author ever tried to explore those? When thousands of unarmed and peace-demanding Taliban were tortured with different means, where were these alert ears?

As far as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is concerned, using two different attitudes in one concern and having two different views for the same phenomenon is not acceptable, and they are merely exaggerations for the sake of wide publicity. As to the Iranian intelligence agents, the information provided even goes beyond the jurisdiction of the investigation of the responsible committee. This is to make the Iranian authorities happy and conceal their intervention in Afghanistan.

In the report, there is a mention of China and Mongolia just for future exploitation purposes.

To illustrate the author's short-mindedness, it is enough to reject this unjust claim of his which states that Taliban kill even animals, women and children, or rape women. All of these accusations are baseless, and are only directed to disrespect Islam. They are useless efforts, and only the passage of time proves its falsehood. The world will necessarily find out the truth in the course of time.

Our only demand from the humanitarians of the world is to please heal the wounds of Afghans and don't make them worse.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

6. The Special Rapporteur is horrified by the latest reports from Afghanistan, which are profoundly disturbing and indicate a worsening pattern of grave human rights violations.

He expresses particular shock and dismay at the killings and other violations that have taken place in August and September 1998, in particular in the areas of Mazar-I-Sharif and Bamyan, which have included summary executions and arbitrary detention of non-combatants. The Special Rapporteur condemns all types of human rights violations in the strongest terms, in particular the heinous acts affecting the inherent right to life that have taken place recently. There can be no justification or tolerance of such outrages and no impunity for their perpetrators, who must be brought to justice.

7. The suffering of the Afghan people has continued since the publication of the Special Rapporteur's most recent report. He would like to reiterate that silence cannot be the strategy of the international community. The scale of violations in Afghanistan and suffering of the civilian population warrants the urgent attention of the world community.

8. The Special Rapporteur also deplores the killing of United Nations staff in Afghanistan in July and August 1998, and expresses his condolences to their families.

B. Recommendations

9. The Special Rapporteur calls on all sides to put an immediate end to the armed conflict, to show restraint and respect for human rights, including the right to life and security of all persons, and to refrain forthwith from any acts that may constitute violations of human rights of both the civilian population and combatants, including those based on ethnicity and religion. He calls on all parties to respect international human rights, including the rights of women, and humanitarian law. All sides should respect all human rights of people living in the areas which they control, and should respect in particular their inherent right to life.

10. All non-combatants who are detained by any party should be released. The International Committee of the Red Cross should be given unhindered access to all prisoners and detainees. Prisoners should not be used as bargaining chips, and all non-criminal prisoners should be released.

11. Restrictions placed on women and girls by the Taliban authorities should be lifted.

12. The international community should remain vigilant about respect for human rights in Afghanistan. The United Nations should undertake to monitor more closely and systematically report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan through an enhanced human rights presence in the field.

13. The United Nations should create greater awareness and knowledge about international human rights, including gender awareness, by establishing a human rights advisory capacity in the field.

14. The United Nations should investigate the grave violations of human rights which have taken place in Afghanistan, including reports of mass killings.

15. The Special Rapporteur recommends that aerial photographs be taken of reported sites of mass graves in Afghanistan.

16. The Special Rapporteur calls on all parties in the conflict to cooperate fully with a neutral and objective investigation into violations of human rights.

17. Those found responsible for the grave human rights violations committed in 1997 and 1998 should be brought to justice in keeping with international standards of a fair trial.

18. The Special Rapporteur believes that the most effective way of preventing violations of human rights is for all sides to exercise maximum restraint, resolve disputes peacefully and establish the rule of law. They should endeavour to implement a genuine process of national reconciliation and peace-building.